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OMB Research Study

In response to a request from the Office of Management and Budget, representatives of the Agricultural Research Service and Forest Service are involved in a study of research and development (R&D) projects underway and planned by the two agencies. Ernest L. Corley of the Science and Education Coordination Office is chairing the task force for this study.

The study will determine into which of the following six categories research projects fall: Basic; support for action and regulatory agencies; management and preservation of Federal resources; defense; other long-term, high-risk, and high-payoff potential projects; and applied R&D having a commercial nature.

For research that falls in the latter category (that having a commercial potential), agency and OMB representatives plan to consult with the private sector in determining whether the private sector can or should do the research. OMB has also asked the task force to explore noncommercial-type research which the Federal Government might consider enhancing.

Directions for Science and Education Activities

I recently prepared a paper entitled "Directions and Policies for Science and Education in the U.S. Department of Agriculture." This paper includes a broad overview of current science policy; overall functions, goals, missions, and strategies of S&E agencies; and guidance for program development. It is based on a draft that was circulated last fall to S&E agencies for comments. Copies of the statement are being made available to the heads of the science and education agencies for distribution to all employees. The goal is to increase awareness of the policies and plans under which we are operating.

Congressional Hearings on the FY 1983 Budget

This month, the administrators of the science and education agencies and I appeared before subcommittees of the the House and Senate appropriations committees to present the fiscal year 1983

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budget. The committee members had extensive questions on the 1983 budget development process, especially in light of the economic climate and the magnitude of the Federal deficit. Questions were also raised about science and education agencies' programs and about employment ceilings and management costs within the agencies. Again this year, the committee members emphasized their concern and support for science and education programs.

UAB Appraises 1983 Budget

The National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board (UAB) has issued its congressionally mandated "Appraisal of the Proposed Budget for Food and Agricultural Sciences." In general, the levels of funding proposed by the Administration for research and extension are supported by this independent advisory group, which was created Congress in 1977.

In particular, the board sees the necessity for, and gives high priority to, adequate formula-based agricultural research funding for the State land-grant system, as authorized by the Hatch Act. The board recommended that the Joint Committee on the Future of Cooperative Extension review the feasibility of restructuring State cooperative extension services with regard to educational programs and information delivery systems. The board also questioned the advisability of continuing the trend that has led to a decline in the sizes of State and area extension staffs and to an increase in local (county or parish) staffs.

Copies of the report are available from Barbara Fontana, executive secretary of the UAB, Room 351-A, Administration Building, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Joint Council Sets Issue-Oriented Agenda for 1982

The Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences will meet April 14-16 to tackle a number of important science and education issues and projects on its 1982 agenda.

In preparing for its assessment of agricultural research and education needs, which is mandated by the Agriculture and Food Act, the council will hear presentations on food and fiber needs in the 21st century, projections on the quality and quantity of the resource base, a U.S. and global assessment of the land base, and a world assessment of supply and demand for food.

The council will also identify program areas to address in its report of recommended priorities, which is due to the Secretary by June 30. Part of the April meeting will focus on the roles and

responsibilities of public and private organizations that are involved in science and education work, the working relationships of Federal and private organizations, and the potential for improving coordination of agricultural research and education programs.

Congressional Oversight Hearings on Extension Held

Three days of oversight hearings on extension covered formula funding; the Federal-State-local partnership; extension's mission and audience; the role of USDA's Extension Service; the flexibility of organization and programs as a special extension strength at State and local levels; volunteers; user fees; and other topics.

Witnesses included Raymond D. Lett, executive assistant to Secretary Block; Mary Nell Greenwood, USDA Extension Service administrator; several State extension directors and administrators; and representatives of local governments, extension agents' associations, extension clients, and extension cooperators. Overall, the testimony was favorable toward extension.

French and American Scientists Sign Research Agreement

USDA has established a formal relationship between the agricultural research communities of France and the United States with a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in agricultural science and technology. The agreement with the French National Research Institute of Agronomy (INRA)--the central body in charge of agricultural research in France--was signed at the first meeting of a U.S.-France working group on March 15 in Washington, D.C.

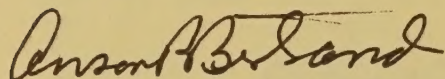
Several areas of possible cooperation were noted in the agreement. These include efforts in remote sensing, biological pest control, fruit cultivation, and animal production. At the meeting, the group discussed additional areas of mutual interest, such as scientific exchanges, possible long-term joint research projects, and agricultural research priorities of both countries in coming decades.

The 19-member working group is composed of 6 French members representing INRA and the Embassy of France. U.S. members are from our science and education agencies and from USDA's Office of International Cooperation and Development, Foreign Agricultural Service, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, and Statistical Reporting Service.

NAL Blue Ribbon and NASULGC Groups Study Library

A National Agricultural Library Blue Ribbon Interagency Panel has launched a study of the library's operations, under the chairmanship of Ray Kline of the U.S. General Services Administration. The panel will be collecting information about the library's mission and goals, organization and staffing, use of technology, alternate methods of funding, and internal, international, and other external users. Comments on these and other areas of concern may be sent for the panel's consideration to Sarah T. Kadec, staff director, USDA-SEMS, Room 543, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782 (telephone 301-436-8774).

To supplement the NAL study, the Division of Agriculture of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges has established a related committee to review the library's services. Daniel I. Padberg, Director of Extension at the University of Massachusetts, chairs this committee which will report its findings to the association for submission to the Blue Ribbon Panel.



ANSON R. BERTRAND
Director
Science and Education